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KHPA Seeks Proposals for New Eligibility System

Goal is to improve access to health coverage for uninsured Kansas families

(TOPEKA) – The Kansas Health Policy Authority took a significant step today toward giving Kansas families and children better access to health coverage through Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program.

The agency released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a new, state-of-the-art computer-driven system that will screen applicants for eligibility in the state’s public insurance programs.

“Like many states around the country, we’ve been using an antiquated system that dates back to the 1980s,” said KHPA Executive Director Dr. Andy Allison. “These ‘legacy systems,’ as they’re called, are notoriously slow and cumbersome by today’s standards, and it takes a lot of money and manpower to keep them maintained and updated. This new system will bring Kansas healthcare programs into the 21st century and make it much easier to process applications and get people enrolled.”

Allison added that the new system will go a long way toward preventing the kind of backlog in applications that KHPA has experienced in recent months. That’s because it will allow people to fill out electronic applications online. Currently, paper applications must be filled out by hand and mailed into KHPA’s Eligibility Clearinghouse where they are sorted and processed.

Darin Bodenhamer, Medicaid Eligibility Director at KHPA, said: “This new system will really help us change the way we do business with the public. This new automated process will enable us to reduce our reliance on state personnel and resources by building community partnerships with health clinics and other providers throughout the state. It will enable us to provide faster, better and more accurate service for the people of Kansas and, in the end, improve access to health coverage programs for Kansas children and families who really need it.

Funding for the KATCH initiative is being provided by a federal grant that KHPA received in September 2009 from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), a division within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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In addition to the new enrollment and eligibility system, the KATCH initiative will provide for a standardized and automated application for processing Presumptive Eligibility. That process allows certain Medicaid providers to make Medicaid and CHIP determinations for children using tools provided by KHPA.

Finally, the KATCH initiative is also funding out-stationed eligibility workers at several safety net clinics and local health agencies throughout the state. These out-stationed workers are able to guide people through the application and enrollment process. They also participate in school enrollment activities and community health fairs to provide information about state of Kansas health coverage programs. And they help recruit and train community partners, such as staff at local health clinics and local social service agencies, increasing KHPA's capacity to reach and assist more people.

Additional information about the KATCH project, including locations of out-stationed eligibility workers, is available on the KHPA website: <http://www.khpa.ks.gov/katch/default.htm>.